

Nutrition After Fifty

Tips and Recipes



Contents

1 Introduction 2

2 Prevention Is Possible..... 3

3 How to Stay Healthy 4

4 Common Age-Related
Health Questions..... 19

5 Recipes 25

6 Additional Resources 34

1 Introduction

Turning 50, 60, 70 or even 80 isn't what it used to be. Americans are living longer and enjoying life more than ever. One desire we all share is to feel good and stay healthy. This brochure can show you how good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle can add vitality to your years and help you reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases. It is written for people age 50 and over. It also contains plenty of general information and practical strategies for those of any age who would like to lower their risk for chronic illness and feel better than ever.

2

Prevention Is Possible

Many cancer cases can be prevented. That's what a panel of leading scientists concluded after analyzing over 4,500 research studies on diet and cancer from around the world. Their findings are documented in AICR's landmark 1997 report, *Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: a global perspective*. Experts found that 30 to 40 percent of all cases of cancer could be prevented if people would make recommended dietary choices, keep physically active and maintain a healthy body weight.

The report's findings on the best ways to prevent cancer can be summed up in the following simple action steps:

AICR Diet and Health Guidelines for Cancer Prevention

1. Choose a diet rich in a variety of plant-based foods.
 2. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.
 3. Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active.
 4. Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
 5. Select foods low in fat and salt.
 6. Prepare and store food safely.
- And always remember...*
Do not use tobacco in any form.

You have the power to improve your health and reduce your risk for cancer and other diseases, like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and obesity. If you've already suffered from these diseases, you can help prevent them from recurring or lessen their hold on your health. It's often a matter of the choices you make.

3 How to Stay Healthy

When it comes to your cancer risk and overall health, the foods you choose have a major impact. There is still much to learn about nutrition and aging, but scientists are continually finding answers.

We know that plant substances found in vegetables and fruits can help prevent the cell damage that, over time, can lead to the weakening of body tissues such as skin, organs and vessels, and diseases such as cancer. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D can help prevent osteoporosis, the leading cause of bone fractures in older adults. The B vitamins folate, B6 and B12 may help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Early studies show these vitamins could possibly delay a decline in brain activities like concentration, reason and memory that may come with age. In addition, researchers are also discovering that it's never too late to reap the benefits of exercise. That's true even for people in their 80s and 90s, who have been shown to increase their muscle mass, strength and independence by strength training.

By adopting sensible diet and exercise habits, you can enjoy the rewards of a longer, healthier life. Make change easier by taking it one step at a time. Seek out support, build on your successes and enjoy the benefits you'll receive from doing positive things for your health.

Focus on Plant-Based Foods

Many of us grew up as “meat and potatoes” people. As a result, eating more plant-based foods is probably a new idea. In our lifetimes, a wealth of information has come to light about the ways in which foods can affect our health. We know that by choosing to eat more foods that come from plants and fewer that come from animals, we can benefit our health in many ways, including helping to prevent cancer and heart disease, maintain a healthy weight and promote digestion.

Work toward filling at least two-thirds of your plate with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans and one-third or less with fish, poultry or lean meat. Try adapting favorite recipes to include larger amounts of plant-based foods and smaller amounts of meat or poultry. Try new recipes from the newspaper, cooking magazines, television cooking programs or Internet websites. You might even want to take a healthy cooking class to taste and learn to prepare a variety of plant-based dishes.

Adapt favorite recipes to include larger amounts of **plant-based foods** and smaller amounts of meat or poultry.

Fill Up on Vegetables and Fruits

When it comes to vegetables and fruits, think variety and think abundance. These two food groups are two of your best dietary defenses against cancer and other diseases. In fact, experts estimate that simply eating at least five servings of vegetables and fruits each day could decrease overall cancer rates by 20 percent. Fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants and other phytochemicals that are potent cancer fighters. Phytochemicals, literally “plant chemicals,” are found in all plants; most have been discovered in only the last 10 years. Some phytochemicals are antioxidants that can deactivate cell-damaging molecules in the body, and thereby slow tissue weakening, aging and cancer development.

Did you know... that fitting more servings of vegetables and fruits into your day could be easy? Try these ideas:

- **Make breakfast count.** In addition to your cereal or toast, start the day with a glass of 100% fruit juice and mixed berries stirred into lowfat or nonfat yogurt. Or combine juice, fruit and yogurt in a blender for a quick, healthy breakfast shake.
- **Pack a fruit or veggie snack** for a day’s outing. Bring along dried fruits, like apples, apricots, prunes or raisins. Stash a snack-size can of peaches or pears packed in fruit juice (and a plastic spoon) in your bag.
- **Add vegetables to your everyday meals.** Add carrots, peppers and broccoli, or sliced mushrooms and zucchini, to pasta sauce. Top a baked potato with salsa. Lessen the layer of cheese on your pizza and load it with vegetables like tomatoes, onions, green peppers, broccoli and spinach.
- **Choose fruit for dessert.** Top lowfat frozen yogurt with sliced strawberries. Slice ripe peaches onto graham crackers. Have a baked apple sprinkled with cinnamon.

- **Look beyond the usual.** Try different varieties of melons, potatoes or greens. Make a fruit salad with mango, papaya, kiwi, pineapple or other fruits that are new to you. Create a new vegetable salad with Belgian endive, radicchio, cherry tomatoes and yellow bell peppers.
- **Make it easy on yourself.** The convenience of frozen and canned vegetables and fruits makes them an easy addition to many meals. Veggies and fruits are frozen right after harvesting and contain similar nutrient levels to fresh produce. Canned products are preserved after being lightly cooked. They are also a very nutritious choice. Be sure to rinse canned veggies before using to wash off excess sodium. Also, choose fruit canned in its own juice.

Go Easy on Red Meat and Fats

If you eat red meat, try to limit portions to three ounces or less a day – about the size of a deck of cards. Too much red meat probably increases the risk of cancers of the colon and rectum, and possibly does the same for cancers of the breast, prostate, pancreas and kidney.

The type of fat found mainly in animal products like meat, milk, cheese, eggs, butter and lard is called saturated fat. There are many reasons to avoid eating a diet high in saturated fat, and high in fat in general. This type of diet possibly increases the risk of cancers of the lung, colon, rectum, breast, prostate and endometrium. It also increases heart disease risk.

Fat in general is high in calories. Excess fat and calories can lead to weight gain, which itself increases the risk of some forms of cancer, particularly endometrial cancer. Obesity also heightens risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. Look for tips to control your weight in the next section.

Eating some fat is important for health, but certain fats are healthier than others. Vegetable oils like olive or canola are your best choices because they are high in monounsaturated fat and low in saturated fat. When choosing a spread, look for a soft tub margarine or squeeze spread that includes little saturated and no trans fat. Trans fat acts like saturated fat in the body. It may increase the risk of heart disease and other illnesses. The softer the spread, the less trans fat it will contain. There are several spreads that are saturated and trans fat-free available – try to find one you like.

When baking, sometimes there is no substitute for butter, stick margarine or shortening. If you like the taste of your favorite cake and cookie recipes, and there are no simple ways to make them more healthful, don't change them. Just save these snack foods for special occasions and savor them in small portions. Focus instead on making healthier choices of the oils and spreads you eat every day.

Keep Weight in Check

Carrying around extra pounds can slow you down. It also affects your health – increasing your chances of developing heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, joint problems and some cancers.

Did you know... as you get older, your body may need fewer calories to maintain its weight? Use these tips to help you reach a healthy weight:

- **Set yourself up for success.** Fill your fridge and cupboards with mostly plant-based foods. Keep nutritious foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans where they are easy to find. Keep higher-calorie treats out of sight or, better yet, out of the house.
- **Pay attention to portions.** Eating too much of anything – even lowfat or fat-free foods – can affect your weight. Find serving size information on the Nutrition Facts panel of a food label. Get out your measuring cups and see what one portion

looks like on your plate. This will give you an accurate idea of how much you are eating.

- **Cut down on fat.** Fat is high in calories. Try lower-fat versions of higher-fat foods, such as dressings, spreads, milk and cheese. Be aware, however, that lowfat or fat-free products may contain added sugar for flavor, so calorie levels may still be high. Read the nutrition labels of the foods you choose. If you eat meat, make sure it's lean. Discard the skin from poultry. Sauté vegetables in minimal oil or use broth, water or cooking spray to cut down on fat.
- **Drink up.** A glass of sparkling mineral water, low sodium tomato juice, tea or cup of broth-based soup before your meal may help you feel less hungry when your entrée is served. Also, all adults should aim for eight glasses of water or other non-alcoholic fluid daily.
- **Enjoy what you eat.** Eat slowly and savor every bite. Eating healthfully can be delicious. And when you know you are eating for good health, you can feel true satisfaction after a meal.
- **Keep active to help burn calories** and stay healthy. The next section offers inspiration.

Activate Your Days

Why exercise? Physical activity, at any age, burns calories, increases your energy level, helps relieve stress and depression, helps you sleep better, improves your strength, flexibility and balance and makes you feel better overall. Research shows that regular physical activity helps prevent colon cancer and possibly breast and lung cancers. It also helps protect against the increased cancer risk that's linked with being overweight or obese. Being active also helps prevent heart disease, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis.

Being active is a boon for the body and mind, so finding a way to do it is essential. Since people's physical abilities, health concerns, fitness goals,

interests and schedules are so diverse, it's important to find activities that you can do and that you enjoy. For example, if hiking is too difficult or inconvenient for you, perhaps walking, swimming or stationary bicycling would be a better fit. Try yoga or gentle stretching exercises to help you maintain flexibility, prevent injury and relieve stress. Adding some light weight training to the exercise you do can help increase strength, speed up metabolism and may even ease arthritis pain. Exercising with a friend or in a group can make your workout a social event that you look forward to each day.

Whatever you decide to do, what is most important is that you stick with it. Do what you can when you can. AICR recommends aiming for 60 minutes of moderate activity every day and 60 minutes of vigorous activity once a week. If exercise is new to you, start slowly. Try for a total of 10, 15 or 20 minutes a day and work up from there. Also, you can divide it up throughout the day – 10 minutes here and 10 minutes there – and still reap the benefits. It is important to speak with your doctor before starting an exercise program or before increasing the intensity of your physical activity.



Flavor Your Foods

Americans consume more salt and high-sodium foods than is good for our health. You may be surprised to hear that most of the sodium in the American diet comes from processed foods such as soups, sauces, meats, frozen dinners, chips and crackers. Foods with no “salty” taste at all may still be high in sodium. And for some people, too much sodium may worsen high blood pressure and increase the risk of stroke. Diets high in salted foods and foods preserved in salt can increase the risk for stomach cancer – although this cancer is rare in the United States.

To cut down on salt, read food labels and look for low-sodium versions of your favorite processed foods. Also, think fresh. Fresh foods have less sodium than commercially canned or frozen foods. You can prepare your foods with less salt, avoid adding salt to cooking water and taste your food before salting. Then flavor your foods with an abundance of fresh and fragrant herbs, spices, salsas, chutneys and healthful sauces. Experiment in the kitchen. Invite friends over for a delicious, flavorful dinner.

Did you know...the senses of taste and smell decline with age? Medications can also affect how food tastes. As the senses get duller, food can start to lose its flavor and appeal. To give foods a boost:

- **Vary the texture and temperature of foods** at one meal. For instance, top smooth lowfat yogurt with crunchy cereal. Enjoy a cool fruit salad and sorbet following a hot and spicy Mexican burrito.
- **Use color to maximize eye appeal.** Add red and yellow pepper strips to a mixed green salad; sprinkle red paprika on white potatoes; create a rainbow fruit salad with red and green grapes, honeydew and cantaloupe chunks, strawberries and blueberries.
- **Intensify the flavor.** Use seasonings, spices and herbs instead of salt and fat for flavor. As an added bonus, herbs and spices contain health-protective phytochemicals. To start, use $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of fresh herbs (or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried) per serving, until you get a feel for the amount that suits your taste.

Cooking With Herbs and Spices

Here are some common herbs and spices and the foods they complement.

Basil

Green beans, potatoes, summer and winter squash, tomato dishes, salads, salad dressings, soups, rice

Cilantro

Mexican and Southwestern cuisines, marinades, salads, soups, stews

Cumin

Mexican and Southwestern cuisines, tomatoes, chili, sauces

Dill

Brussels sprouts, cucumbers, salads, sauces, fish

Garlic

Asian, Italian and Mexican cuisines, mushrooms, potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini, dips, sauces, soups, chicken, fish

Ginger (fresh)

Asian and Indian cuisines, marinades, stir-fries, sauces, stews, soups



Oregano

Mediterranean and Mexican cuisines, mushrooms, summer squash, green beans, tomatoes, marinades, salad dressings, poultry, fish

Rosemary

Green beans, mushrooms, peas, potatoes, tomato sauces, poultry, fish, lamb, pork

Sage

Green beans, peas, tomatoes, zucchini, eggs, soups, stuffings, fish, beef

Thyme

Onions, stews, stuffings, poultry, fish, meat

Turmeric

Indian and Moroccan cuisines, rice, vegetable curries, poultry, lamb



Choose Moderation When Drinking Alcohol

You may have read that moderate amounts of alcohol may help protect against heart disease. Drinking alcohol, however, can increase the risk of liver, mouth and throat cancers as well as possibly breast and colon cancers. While reasonable amounts of alcohol may enhance the enjoyment of meals, drinking to excess can impair judgment, which can lead to accidents and injury. Alcohol can also interfere with the effectiveness of some medications. (See pages 15-16 for specific alcohol and drug interactions.)

It is important to weigh for yourself the risks and benefits of drinking alcohol. AICR recommends avoiding alcohol. If you decide to drink, limit alcoholic beverages to no more than two drinks a day for men, and one for women.

Supplement Your Diet Wisely

As your body ages, your nutritional needs change. For example, your body absorbs less vitamin B12 from the food you eat. Your skin's ability to produce vitamin D from sunlight also decreases. In addition, some studies show that more vitamin E may help reduce your risk of heart disease.

For these reasons, many health experts advise older people to take a 100% Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) multivitamin-mineral supplement once a day. Basic supplementation can help prevent deficiencies caused by aging and may add extra protection against disease. Be sure to discuss any dietary supplement with your doctor first.

Taking more than a “multivitamin,” however, is not recommended. High doses of single vitamins and minerals can have adverse effects. Science indicates that these substances work in the body as a team. Too much of one can create an imbalance.

Whether you decide to take a supplement or not, it is still important to eat a wide variety of vegetables

and fruits every day as part of a mostly plant-based diet. Vegetables and fruits contain vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals that help protect your health and fight disease. While scientists are still discovering and learning about all the protective substances in vegetables and fruits, eating whole foods is a sure way to get them.

Did you know... food, alcohol and dietary supplements may interact with drugs, changing the effectiveness of the drug or the way nutrients are absorbed in your body?

Keep your doctor and pharmacist informed of all the over-the-counter and prescription drugs you take and any vitamin, mineral or herbal supplements you are using. Ask about interactions between these substances and food or alcohol. Take medications only as directed and adhere to any warnings found on the label. If you're unable to read the drug name or understand the instructions on the label, ask for assistance or ask the pharmacist for a copy with larger size type.

Here are some interactions between common drugs and foods that it is wise to be aware of:

- Aspirin and ibuprofen should be taken with meals, since these drugs can irritate the stomach.
- Do not take the antibiotic tetracycline, or its derivatives (except doxycycline), at the same time as dairy foods or calcium supplements. The calcium in these products can block the absorption of the drug.
- Vitamin K can make the blood clot faster, so if you're on a blood-thinning medication, like Coumadin, avoid large amounts of foods that are high in the vitamin, such as kale, spinach and other greens, parsley, broccoli and Brussels sprouts; eating small amounts of these foods is fine. Avoid alcohol if you use a blood thinning medication.
- If you are taking an antidepressant that functions as a monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitor such as Isocarboxazid, Phenelzine sulfate or Tranylcypromine, it is important that you avoid foods high in tyramine. Eating aged cheeses, sausages like salami,

herring, liver, red wine and beer could lead to a deadly change in blood pressure – ask your doctor for a complete list of foods to avoid and about the use of other alcoholic drinks.

- If you use gout medication such as Allopurinol, it is important to drink at least 10 to 12 glasses of water a day and to avoid alcohol.
- Grapefruit juice (but not other citrus juices) changes the way the body processes some medications, including certain cholesterol-lowering drugs and blood pressure medications. If you like to drink grapefruit juice, check with your doctor about any possible reactions with prescription medications.

Store and Prepare Food Safely

With increased age comes an increased risk for food borne illness. This may be due to an aging immune system or an existing health problem. For some, poor eyesight and difficulty cleaning the kitchen may add to this risk.

There are a few simple precautions you can take to avoid food borne illness:

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Make sure your refrigerator temperature stays below 40°F. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check the temperature or keep it as cold as possible without freezing milk.
- Don't allow perishable foods to sit at room temperature for more than two hours, or more than one hour in hot weather. Store groceries or leftovers quickly in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Thaw frozen foods by a safe method: in the refrigerator, in the microwave or in a cold water bath in which the water is changed every thirty minutes. Thawing frozen foods on the kitchen counter is not a safe method.
- When refrigerating leftovers, it is a good idea to mark the date and use them within one to two

days. Keep in mind, though, that food may look or smell fine yet still not be safe to eat. If in doubt, throw the food out.

- Be sure to carefully read expiration dates on food labels and take note of visible food spoilage.
- Fully cook eggs until yolks are no longer runny. Steer clear of recipes that call for raw eggs, such as homemade mayonnaise or Caesar salad dressing.
- During food preparation, wash your hands frequently. Also, change kitchen towels and sponges often, keep counters clean and regularly wipe down drawer, door and refrigerator handles.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meats away from other foods and use different cutting boards for chopping vegetables and meats. Also, once meat is cooked, don't place it back on the cutting board, plate or platter used when the meat was raw. Keep cutting boards clean by washing with hot, soapy water, then sanitize by putting through the dishwasher or rinsing in a solution of one teaspoon chlorine bleach and one quart water.
- When needed, be sure to ask for assistance with cooking or cleaning up.

Did you know... that color is not a reliable way to tell if a hamburger is fully cooked? Buy and use a food thermometer to be sure your foods are cooked fully and safely.

Here are internal temperatures at which different foods are safely cooked:

- Ground beef: 160°F
- Pork: 160°F
- Whole poultry and thighs: 180°F
- Poultry breasts: 170°F
- Ground chicken or ground turkey: 165°F
- Most seafood and fish: 145°F
- Egg dishes or casseroles with eggs: 160°F

Digital, instant-read food thermometers are a better choice for checking the temperature of cooked

foods than the large, dial food thermometers that are commonly stuck deep into a large piece of meat during the cooking process in the oven. A digital thermometer can read the temperature of a food in only ten seconds. It needs to penetrate only ½-inch into the food. It can also accurately read the temperature of thinner hamburgers and chicken breasts. Look for digital, instant-read thermometers in kitchen stores and supermarkets.

Be sure to fully cook meats, but not to overcook them. Eating charred meat, fish and poultry – especially those cooked by an open flame – may increase your risk for stomach, colon and rectal cancers. Grill meats only occasionally and keep flames away from food by using aluminum foil or indirect heating. Or, reduce the formation of cancer-causing compounds by microwaving meats for two minutes, then placing on the grill to finish cooking. Using a marinade for even a few minutes can reduce the formation of dangerous compounds. Discard marinades after use or boil for a few minutes before using as a basting sauce. Better yet, grill veggies instead. Grilling low-protein foods, such as vegetables and fruits, does not affect cancer risk.

Tobacco

You've heard it many times before: Don't smoke or use tobacco in any form. Smoking puts your health at risk. It is the main cause of lung cancer and also contributes to cancers of the mouth, throat, pancreas, cervix and bladder. Tobacco use is responsible for 30 percent of all cancers and increases the risk of heart disease and respiratory disease. Even if you're a long-time smoker, you can still benefit from quitting.

4 Common Age-Related Health Questions

As we get older, many of us lead active, independent lives, while others are confronted with medical or lifestyle situations that make it harder to adopt healthy habits. Not all of us will face the same challenges. The questions and answers that follow may help you find solutions to some of yours – and help you take control of your health.

Q. My mouth is sore and I'm having problems chewing. What should I do?

A. You may experience a sore mouth for many reasons, including gum disease, poor-fitting dentures or soreness caused by a medication or medical treatment. Choose foods that have a soft or creamy texture. Here are some examples of nutritious foods that are easier to chew:

- baked or mashed sweet potatoes, cooked vegetables or vegetable juice
- very ripe, canned, mashed or puréed fruit
- cooked pasta, couscous, barley or hot cereal
- tofu, cooked or canned beans, lowfat refried beans or hummus
- yogurt, pudding, milk shakes or soft lowfat cheese
- cooked and chopped lean meat, chicken, fish, scrambled eggs, peanut butter or almond butter

It is also a good idea to:

- Visit your dentist and have your teeth checked. If you wear dentures, make sure they fit properly.

Keep in mind that changes in your weight can affect the fit of your dentures.

- Drink fluids with meals to make chewing and swallowing easier.

Q. I don't feel like eating. I've lost my appetite and I'm losing weight, which I don't need to do. Any suggestions?

A. There are many reasons for a loss of appetite, including illness, depression, pain and some medications. Discuss your loss of appetite with your physician. Poor nutrition prevents proper healing and can bring on fatigue. If it causes you to become underweight, you also have a greater chance of suffering from falls or bone fractures.

To perk up your appetite:

- Make mealtimes appealing. Choose foods with vibrant colors and pleasant aromas that permeate the room. Set an attractive table, even if you're the only one eating. Use a tablecloth or place mats and colorful dishes or napkins. Put flowers on the table, play soft music and relax while you're eating.
- Stimulate your appetite with a pre-meal walk.

To help prevent weight loss:

- Eat more frequent, smaller meals, about four to six a day.
- Eat regularly, at specific times of the day.
- Keep high-calorie foods on hand. Snack on crackers with peanut or almond butter, eat dried fruit or enjoy a bagel or English muffin with fruit preserves or a tasty bean spread. Add grated cheese to pasta dishes or to a baked potato stuffed with veggies.
- Drink higher-calorie beverages like milk, juice or fruit and yogurt shakes more often than coffee, tea or diet sodas.
- Prepare hot cereal and soup with milk instead of water.

- Consider a commercial liquid supplement. Speak with your doctor or a registered dietitian for assistance in choosing a liquid supplement or other foods that can help you gain weight or prevent further weight loss. Also, check with your doctor about taking vitamin and mineral supplements. Keep in mind, however, that supplements are not a substitute for eating healthfully.

Q. I've been constipated lately. What can I do?

A. There are several simple ways to relieve constipation:

- Eat plenty of fiber-rich foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and bran cereal. If you're not used to eating high-fiber foods, add them slowly to your diet and drink extra water to avoid abdominal discomfort.
- Drink plenty of water. Fluids keep the fiber moving in your body and add bulk to stools, making elimination easier. Aim for at least 8 cups of water or other fluids a day.
- Keep active. It helps to keep your body regular.
- Don't make laxatives a habit. Heavy use of laxatives can make your body depend on them, which could eventually prevent your system from working on its own.
- If constipation is more than an occasional problem, speak with your doctor.

Q. I have diverticulosis. What should I eat?

A. A low-fiber diet can lead to constipation and pressure in the colon, which causes pouches (diverticula) to form at weak spots. This condition is known as diverticulosis.

Eat a high-fiber diet full of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans to control your condition or prevent diverticulosis altogether.

Until recently, many doctors suggested that people with diverticulosis avoid foods with small seeds, like tomatoes and berries. It was thought that particles could lodge in the pouches and cause inflammation. Research now questions the need for this restriction.

If the pouches become inflamed, diverticulitis occurs. Medical treatment is necessary to prevent complications from the abdominal pain and fever. During this time, often a liquid diet is needed. However, once the inflammation has cleared, you should eat a high-fiber diet again.

Q. My arthritis is bothering me and I don't have the energy to cook as much as I used to. Do you have any ideas on preparing quick and easy meals for one?

A. Here are a few ideas for making easy meals in minutes:

- Don't do all of the work yourself. Pre-cut, frozen stir-fry vegetables, pre-cooked and pre-sliced chicken strips and pre-washed, pre-cut salad greens can save you effort and energy in the kitchen. (Read labels to avoid products high in sodium.) Heat the vegetables with the meat or chicken strips and add low sodium soy sauce for an easy stir-fry. Or create a tasty chef's salad by topping the salad greens with chicken or meat and lowfat cheese and dressing. Enjoy with a whole grain roll.
- Make more than one serving of pasta or rice and save the extra for another day. Add cooked vegetables, canned beans and a prepared low fat, low sodium pasta sauce for a nutritious one-dish meal.
- Add leftover vegetables and chicken or lean meat to reduced sodium canned soups. Have a whole wheat roll and lowfat milk or pudding to round out the meal.
- Make it easier on yourself to prepare a meal. Sit while you work. Make sure cooking utensils and

equipment are easily accessible. Keep appliances on the counter and pots and pans on lower shelves.

- Cook a few dishes when you have the time and energy, and freeze in meal-size portions to reheat in a hurry.
- Try the easy-to-prepare recipes that appear at the end of this booklet.
- If cooking gets too difficult or you become too ill to leave your home, you may qualify for home-delivered meals. Call your local Office on Aging and ask about the Meals on Wheels program. (See “Additional Resources” on page 35 for help in finding home-delivered meal programs near you.)

Q. I don't like to eat by myself. How can I make up for missing meals?

A. Instead of missing meals, explore opportunities for making mealtimes more social.

Here are some ideas to try:

- Call a friend or relative and designate a specific day each week to go out to eat. If the restaurant portion is too large, split it with your companion or take part of it home and refrigerate it promptly for tomorrow's lunch or dinner.
- Organize a monthly potluck dinner with some friends or neighbors. Ask everyone to bring a dish to share. To make it more interesting, have the dinner in a different person's home each month.
- Call your local senior center or Office on Aging to find out about community lunch programs for older adults. It's a great way to socialize and enjoy a nutritious meal. (See “Additional Resources” on page 35 for help in locating a senior meal site near you.)

Q. I take my meals at the dining center of my adult residence community. How can I make healthy choices when I'm not the cook?

A. It is possible to eat very healthfully, even if you're not in charge of the cooking. Follow these tips for smart meal selection:

- Choose dishes that are plant-based. That means two-thirds or more of the plate is covered with vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans and one-third or less is covered with meat, chicken or fish. In general, mixed dishes such as pastas and stir-fries are mostly plant-based. If necessary, request that a special plate be made for you that has less meat and more plant-based foods.
- If offered soup, opt for selections with vegetables such as minestrone, vegetable noodle or tomato.
- Always request a vegetable salad with your meal, if available.
- Ask for whole grain bread or rolls to accompany your meal.
- Select 100% fruit juice such as orange, grapefruit, cranberry or prune juice for your beverage rather than a fruit “drink” or “punch.”
- Often, dessert selections include a fruit cup. On most days, pass up the cheesecake in favor of fruit. Or have a few bites of the cheesecake and save the fruit for a healthy snack later.

Cook a few dishes when you have the time and energy, and **freeze** in meal-size portions to **reheat** in a hurry.

5

Recipes

If you're searching for recipes that are nutritious, fast and easy to prepare, AICR has some great ideas for you. Most make enough for four to six people – perfect for sharing with friends and family or freezing for easy meals later.

Orange-Pineapple Smoothie

1 banana	1 cup orange juice
2 cups pineapple chunks packed in juice, drained	¼ cup nonfat milk
	2 Tbsp. honey
	4-5 ice cubes

Place all ingredients in blender and purée until smooth.

Makes 2 servings. Per serving: 326 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g saturated fat), 80 g carbohydrates, 2 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 38 mg sodium.

Mint Tabbouleh

½ cup bulghur, cooked according to package directions	1 small zucchini, finely diced
⅔ cup chopped mint, lightly packed	1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
12 cherry tomatoes, halved (or 6 large, quartered)	2 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Drain cooked bulghur well and place in medium bowl. Add mint, tomatoes and zucchini. Toss with fork to combine. Mix in lemon juice and oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. This salad keeps in refrigerator, tightly covered, 1 day.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 98 calories, 3 g fat (<1 g saturated fat), 17 g carbohydrates, 3 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 9 mg sodium.

Cranberry and Sweet Potato Bread

Nonstick cooking spray	½ tsp. cinnamon
2 large eggs	½ tsp. nutmeg
¾ cup light brown sugar, firmly packed	½ tsp. allspice or mace
⅓ cup canola oil	1 tsp. baking soda
1 cup mashed, canned sweet potatoes	1 cup chopped, dried unsweetened cranberries
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract	1-2 Tbsp. Turbinado or Demerara sugar (optional)
½ tsp. orange extract	
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour	

Lightly coat standard loaf pan (8×4- or 9×5-inch) with cooking spray and set aside. Set oven rack in middle and preheat oven to 350 degrees. In medium bowl, whisk eggs, sugar, oil, sweet potatoes and extracts until well combined.

In large bowl, sift together flour, spices and baking soda. Make well in center of mixture and add sweet potato mixture. Mix until just moistened. (Do not over-mix or beat batter until smooth.)

Lightly stir in cranberries. Transfer batter to prepared pan. For a more decorative presentation, dust top of batter with light coating of Turbinado or Demerara sugar.

Bake 50-60 minutes, or until tester comes out clean. If sugar has been added to top of bread, begin checking bread after 30 minutes. If sugar darkens, lightly lay a sheet of aluminum foil on top of pan to prevent burning.

Remove bread from oven and cool 10 minutes on rack. Remove bread from pan and set back on rack to completely cool. Seal bread tightly in plastic wrap, then foil. Tightly wrapped in foil, bread can be stored frozen for up to 1 month.

Makes 12 servings. Per serving: 226 calories, 7 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 37 g carbohydrates, 3 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 137 mg sodium.

Crustless Spinach Pie

Nonstick cooking spray	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3 packages (10 oz. each) frozen spinach	¼ cup fat-free, reduced sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil	¼ cup chopped fresh dill (4 tsp. crumbled, if dried), or to taste
2 large egg whites, at room temperature	
¼ cup (1 oz.) crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese	
¼ cup all-purpose flour	

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat 8-inch spring-form pan with cooking spray. Set aside. Cook spinach according to package directions. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out spinach to remove most of water; coarsely chop. Transfer to bowl and toss with olive oil.

In medium bowl, whisk egg whites until foamy. Mix in cheese, flour, salt and pepper to make a sticky dough. Stir in broth and dill. Add spinach and mix well to combine. Spread mixture in prepared pan into an even layer.

Bake 15 minutes, until set. Cool in pan. Release spring-lock and carefully remove sides of pan. Cut into 8 slices. Serve warm or at room temperature. If desired, pie can be stored up to 24 hours by covering with foil or plastic wrap and refrigerating.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 74 calories, 2 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 10 g carbohydrates, 7 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 209 mg sodium.

Fettuccine with Green and Yellow Squash

8 oz. fettuccine or other favorite pasta	¾ cup frozen peas
4 tsp. olive oil, divided	¼ cup fat-free, reduced sodium vegetable or chicken broth
1 small onion, sliced (about 1 cup)	2 oz. jar chopped pimento, drained
1 small summer squash, thinly sliced	2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese, or to taste
1 small zucchini, thinly sliced	Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 Tbsp. minced garlic	

Cook pasta according to package directions. In 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat 2 teaspoons oil over medium heat. Add onion; cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add squash, zucchini and garlic; cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add peas; cook, stirring, 1 minute or until peas are thawed and vegetables are tender. Drain pasta and add to skillet. Toss with broth, remaining oil, vegetables and pimento. Season with Parmesan cheese and black pepper.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 298 calories, 7 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 50 g carbohydrates, 11 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 118 mg sodium.

Spinach and Shrimp Salad

4 cups packed spinach leaves, stems removed, torn into bite-size pieces	1 cup cubed jicama (optional)
12 oz. cooked shrimp	½ cup shredded purple cabbage
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved	1 small red onion, thinly sliced (optional)

Arrange spinach on serving plates. Top with shrimp and vegetables. Serve with your favorite reduced-fat salad dressing.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 80 calories, <1 g total fat (0 g saturated fat), 6 g carbohydrates, 13 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 144 mg sodium.

Easy Chicken and Vegetable Pot Pie

Also, try substituting turkey breast for the chicken. This is a great way to use leftovers.

3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour	1 package (10 oz.) frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
½ cup plus ⅔ cup fat-free, reduced sodium chicken broth	6 oz. cooked chicken breast, cubed
1 tsp. canola oil	1 prepared pie crust (or favorite reduced fat pie crust recipe)
2 cups chopped mushrooms	2 tsp. fat-free milk
1 ½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme (or ¼ tsp. dried)	
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste	

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In small bowl, whisk together flour and ½ cup broth. In 2-quart saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add mushrooms; cook, stirring, 6 minutes or until tender. Add remaining broth, thyme, salt and pepper; bring to boil. Whisk in flour mixture and cook, stirring constantly, 3 minutes or until thickened. Stir in mixed vegetables and chicken. Remove from heat and place in 8- or 9-inch pie plate. Place crust over filling; press dough to edges of pie plate and flute edges. Cut two slits in center of crust and brush top with milk. If using 8-inch plate, place on foil-lined baking sheet since juices may run over during baking. Bake 30-40 minutes or until crust is lightly browned.

Makes 6 servings. Per serving: 267 calories, 11 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 25 g carbohydrates, 14 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 319 mg sodium.

Quick Veggie Stir-fry

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| 1 Tbsp. canola oil | 2 cups cooked brown rice |
| 1 package (15-20 oz.) frozen or fresh vegetables | 2 Tbsp. peanuts or almonds (optional) |
| 1-3 Tbsp. prepared stir-fry sauce (see note) | |

In skillet or wok, heat oil. Add vegetables and stir-fry until tender crisp. Add sauce and heat through. Serve over rice. Sprinkle with nuts, if desired.

Note: Chinese stir-fry sauces like soy and hoisin are available in supermarkets and specialty stores.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 249 calories, 8 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 37 g carbohydrates, 7 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 681 mg sodium.

Herbed Salmon with Vegetables

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| 2 tsp. olive oil | 2 tsp. chopped fresh tarragon or dill (or ½ teaspoon dried) |
| 1 medium onion, sliced (about 1 ½ cups) | |
| 2 carrots, cut into 2-inch matchsticks | Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste |
| 2 stalks celery, cut into 2-inch matchsticks | 12 oz. salmon fillet, skin removed, cut in 4 pieces |

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add vegetables. Cook, stirring often, 5 minutes or until slightly softened. Remove from heat and toss with tarragon or dill, salt and pepper.

Fold four 12-inch sheets of aluminum foil in half. Unfold and place a piece of salmon in center of each sheet, along the fold. Place ¼ of the vegetable mixture over each piece of salmon. Fold foil over salmon and vegetables. Tightly seal. Bake 20 minutes or until salmon is cooked through.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 214 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 9 g carbohydrates, 18 g protein, 2 g dietary fiber, 82 mg sodium.

Vegetable Bean Chili

Leftover cooked vegetables can be added along with the beans. For a milder version, cut down on or cut out the chili powder.

2 tsp. olive oil	½ cup water
1 Spanish onion, chopped	¼ cup tomato paste
1 green bell pepper, chopped	1 bay leaf
1 yellow or red bell pepper, chopped	¾ cup raisins (optional)
2 garlic cloves, minced	2 cans (15 oz. each) kidney beans or other beans of choice, drained and rinsed
1 Tbsp. chili powder, or to taste	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
½ tsp. cumin	
1 can (28 oz.) diced tomatoes	

In large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and peppers; cook, stirring, 6 minutes. Add garlic, chili powder and cumin; cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add tomatoes, water, tomato paste, bay leaf and raisins (if using). Bring mixture to boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add beans and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper.

Makes 8 servings. Per serving: 216 calories, 2 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 43 g carbohydrates, 10 g protein, 12 g dietary fiber, 134 mg sodium.

Nectarine and Raspberry Cobbler

Nonstick cooking spray	¼ tsp. baking soda
6 cups thinly sliced nectarines (about 6 small)	¼ tsp. salt
2 cups fresh raspberries	2 Tbsp. unsalted butter or margarine, very cold
¾ cup sugar, plus 1 Tbsp.	½ cup reduced fat buttermilk
1 cup flour, plus 2 Tbsp. for rolling out	
½ tsp. ground cinnamon	
2 tsp. baking powder	

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Coat 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray and set aside. Toss nectarines and raspberries with ¾ cup sugar, using your hands to distribute sugar evenly through fruit. Spread in prepared baking dish.

For dough topping, combine in bowl: cup of flour, remaining sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Cut butter into small pieces. Cut it into dry ingredients, using pastry cutter or tines of fork, then the tips of your fingers. Work mixture just until it looks grainy. Mix in buttermilk with wooden spoon just until a soft, moist dough forms.

Lightly flour work surface. Turn out dough. Lightly pat it out into ¼-inch thick rectangle, using heel of your hand and sprinkling dough lightly with flour, if necessary. Dip rim of biscuit cutter or small glass in flour. Cut 9 rounds from dough. Arrange them in 3 rows over fruit in baking dish. The rounds should be almost touching, leaving a border of fruit along edges of dish.

Bake 25-30 minutes, or until biscuits are lightly browned and fruit is bubbling with juices. Let sit 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Makes 9 servings. Per serving: 207 calories, 3 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 44 g carbohydrates, 3 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 223 mg sodium.

Pear Crisp

Nonstick cooking spray	¼ cup raisins
¼ cup rolled oats	1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. walnuts	2 Tbsp. sugar
3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour	2 Tbsp. flour
3 Tbsp. whole wheat flour	⅛ tsp. nutmeg
2 ½ Tbsp. packed light brown sugar	Pinch of cloves
⅛ tsp. cinnamon	Caramel pecan or vanilla nonfat frozen yogurt or lowfat ice cream (optional)
1 Tbsp. canola oil, plus 2 tsp.	
6 firm, yet ripe pears, peeled (if desired), cored and cubed	

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly spray 8- or 9-inch round cake pan. In food processor, pulse oats and walnuts 15 seconds. Add flours, brown sugar and cinnamon. Blend 15 more seconds. While running, drizzle oil and blend 30 seconds. Transfer to bowl and mix thoroughly.

In another bowl, toss pears with next 6 ingredients. Spoon pears into prepared cake pan. Cover with oat mixture, pressing down gently. Bake 45-50 minutes, until topping is brown and pears are bubbling. Serve hot, topped with nonfat frozen yogurt or lowfat ice cream, if desired.

Makes 9 servings. Per serving: 164 calories, 4 g total fat (<1 g saturated fat), 34 g carbohydrates, 2 g protein, 4 g dietary fiber, 3 mg sodium.



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Additional Resources

Check the listings below to learn more about aging, community programs for seniors or general health for older adults.

General Information on Aging

AARP (formerly American Association of Retired Persons)

1-800-424-3410

www.aarp.org

This nonprofit membership organization addresses the needs and interests of people age 50 and older.

NIH SeniorHealth

www.nihseniorhealth.gov

A service from the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, NIH Senior Health focuses on aging-related health information. The website is organized by health topic and currently includes information on Alzheimer's Disease and exercise for older adults. Within each topic there are sections containing general background information, videos, short quizzes and frequently asked questions.

National Institute on Aging Information Center

1-800-222-2225 or TTY 1-800-222-4225

www.nia.nih.gov

For the general public and health professionals, NIA offers consumer-oriented information on a wide range of topics important to older people and their families as well as a description of their research program.

National Aging Information Center

202-619-7501 or TTY 800-877-8339

www.aoa.gov/NAIC

This service from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging provides demographic and statistical information relating to older Americans.

Support Services for Older Adults

For assistance locating support services for seniors in your area, including community meal programs and Meals on Wheels for homebound older adults, contact:

- Caregivers-USA

www.caregivers-usa.org

- Elder Care Locator

1-800-677-1116

- Your Local County Office on Aging (Check the government pages in your telephone book under your county's name.)

Diet and Nutrition

American Institute for Cancer Research

1-800-843-8114 or 202-328-7744

www.aicr.org

AICR Newsletter: This free, quarterly publication provides tips on eating well, exercise, great-tasting recipes and the latest information on nutrition and cancer research.

Educational Brochures: AICR brochures provide reliable nutrition information, practical advice and healthful recipes. Single copies are free. To order *Simple Steps to Prevent Cancer*, *Moving Toward a Plant-Based Diet* and more, call or write for a publications catalog or visit AICR online.

Nutrition Hotline: Call 1-800-843-8114 and leave any questions you may have about diet, health, cooking, cancer and more. A registered dietitian will return your call and discuss your questions free of charge. The hotline is available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

To find a registered dietitian:

- Contact the American Dietetic Association's National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics Consumer Nutrition Hotline at 1-800-366-1655 or www.eatright.org.
- Check the yellow pages in your telephone book under "Dietitians" or "Nutritionists."
- Call your local hospital.

Exercise

For information on finding exercise programs near you, contact:

- American Council on Exercise
1-800-825-3636
www.acefitness.org
- American Senior Fitness Association
1-800-243-1478
www.seniorfitness.net
- Aquatic Exercise Association
1-888-AEA-WAVE (1-888-232-9283)
www.aeawave.com
- Fifty-Plus Fitness Association
650-323-6160
www.50plus.org
- Jewish Community Center Association
212-532-4958
www.jcca.org
- YMCA
1-800-USA-YMCA (1-800-872-9622)
www.ymca.net



Stopping cancer before it starts